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Economic and Social Council

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27 February 1998

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-second session
2-13 March 1998
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Status of documentation for the session

Note by the Secretariat

1. By Economic and Social Council resolutions 1979/1 and 1979/69 on the control and limitation of documentation and 1988/77 on the revitalization of the Council, the Council reiterated that the Secretariat should circulate the relevant documentation in all the working languages six weeks before the opening of the sessions of the Council and its subsidiary organs, and invited the Secretariat to take steps to ensure effective compliance with rule 13, paragraph 4, of the rules of procedure of the Council.

2. By resolution 1979/69, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretariat to inform the Council and its subsidiary bodies. In the relevant annotated agenda, which documents had not been issued in accordance with the six-week rule, with a full explanation of the reasons that prevented their circulation.

3. In view of the schedule of the forty-second session of the Commission on theStatus of Women (2-13 March 1998), the documentation for the session should have been submitted to the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services by 5 January and circulated by 19 January 1998. The documents not circulated by that date are listed in the annex below.

* E/CN.6/1998/1 and Corr.1.

98-04846 (E) 270298

Annex

Status of documentation as at 27 February 1998

Agenda item	*Title or description and symbol of document*	*Date of submission to the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division*	*Date of submission to the Central Planning and Coordination Services*	*Actual or projected date of issue*
3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1998/2 and Add.1 and 2)			Issued
3 (c)	Analytical report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission (E/CN.6/1998/5)			Issued
3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (E/CN.6/1998/8)			Issued
3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting information provided by the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 on the role of the Fund in eliminating violence against women (E/CN.6/1998/9)			Issued
3 (a)	Note by the Secretariat on a high-level plenary review in the year 2000 of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1998/10)			Issued
3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on women's real enjoyment of their human rights, in particular those relating to the elimination of poverty, economic development and economic resources (E/CN.4/1998/22-E/CN.6/1998/11)	12 February 1998	25 February 1998	3 March 1998
4	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a confidential list of communications concerning the status of women (E/CN.6/1998/SW/ COMM.LIST/32 and Add.1)	2 February 1998	3 February 1998	3 March 1998

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9 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Forty-second session
2-13 March 1998
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS FORTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Zuzana VRANOVA (Slovakia)

Chapter ____

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 2 to 13 March 1998. The Commission held ____ meetings (1st to ____). In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1997/227, the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also met during the session.

2. In addition, the Commission held ____ meetings as a preparatory committee for the General Assembly's High-level Review in the Year 2000 of the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/100.

3. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the forty-first session of the Commission, Sharon Brennen-Haylock (Bahamas), who also made a statement.

B. Attendance

4. The session was attended by representatives of ____ States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex ____ to the present report.

C. Election of officers

5. At its 1st meeting, on 2 March 1998, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairperson: Patricia Flor (Germany)

Vice-Chairpersons: Karam Fadi Habib (Lebanon)
Marcela Maria Nicodemos (Brazil)
Nonhlanhla P. L. Tsabedze (Swaziland)
Zuzana Vranova (Slovakia)

6. At its 4th meeting, on 3 March, the Commission designated Zuzana Vranova Vice-Chairperson with rapporteurial responsibilities.

D. Agenda and organization of work

7. At its 1st meeting, on 10 March, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda and approved its organization of work, as contained in document E/CN.6/1998/1 and Corr.1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:

   (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;

   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

   (c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.

4. Communications concerning the status of women.

5. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention.

6. Provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-second session.

8. Also at its 1st meeting, the Commission was informed that Aloisia Woergetter (Austria) would continue to serve as Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29.

E. Appointment of the members of a working group on communications on the status of women

9. The Commission established a working group to consider, under agenda item 4, communications concerning the status of women, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27. The following five members, nominated by their regional groups, were appointed:

Esmaeil Afshari (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Fidel Coloma (Chile)

Diénébou Kaba Camara (Côte d'Ivoire)

Sissel Salomon (Norway)

Krystyna Zurek (Poland)

F. Consultations with non-governmental organizations

10. Written statements, submitted by non-governmental organizations in accordance with rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, were circulated in documents E/CN.6/1998/NGO/1-11.

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Addendum

Annex

A. Chairperson's summary

Member States, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations made statements during the general debate, held on 2, 3 and 6 March 1998, on agenda item 3 (c), Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.

Delegates reported on actions taken to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, including specific national action plans which had been formulated for that purpose, which in some cases were elaborated on with assistance from organizations of the United Nations system from specific countries. They underlined the importance of strengthening national and international efforts to follow up on the Beijing Conference, emphasizing that the Platform for Action had become an important frame of reference for action at the national level for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality. While priorities differed, depending on the situation in a given country, the human rights of women and the elimination of violence against women tended to be common priorities. Countries that had not formulated national plans to follow up on the Platform for Action were urged to do so by the year 2000.

Representatives emphasized the importance of pursuing a policy of gender mainstreaming for equality and the empowerment of women. A number reported on

recently formulated gender policies and on the establishment of national mechanisms for the advancement of women, including integration of gender equality goals into development policies, such as a white paper on women's advancement, integration of a gender perspective into a reconstruction and development plan, and mainstreaming gender in federal development plans. Others noted the establishment of monitoring and oversight mechanisms to oversee activities for the advancement of women, sometimes in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society.

The need for development assistance from the international community for national efforts to implement the Platform for Action was underscored.

Several representatives emphasized the urgency of stepping up efforts to collect statistical data disaggregated by sex and on gender-specific indicators. Some reported progress in that regard, including the development by one country of a set of economic gender-equality indicators which provided benchmarks of women's and men's economic realities that were often overlooked.

A number of delegates recommended continued close cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights and their secretariats. One representative called for further rationalization of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women to ensure that, in its decisions and recommendations, it addressed only the central issues.

Several representatives expressed views on the proposals for a high-level review in the year 2000 of the implementation of the Nairobi and Beijing strategies. Preference to convene the review as a special session in May or June in the year 2000 was expressed, and the importance of the preparatory process was emphasized. The substantive framework for the review needed to be established as soon as possible and should provide for active contributions from the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, and United Nations funds and programmes. Delegates welcomed the prospect of the African regional conference, to be convened by the Economic Commission for Africa in 1999.

A number of representatives thanked the Division for the Advancement of Women for the preparation of high-quality reports and endorsed the recommendations in the reports of the expert group meetings, convened by the Division in partnership with other institutions, on gender-based persecution, adolescent girls and their rights, and promoting women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights. The previous Bureau of the Commission was commended for its efforts intersessionally to prepare for the Commission and its panel discussions.

B. Human rights of women: Moderator's summary

On 3 March, at its 4th meeting, the Commission held a panel discussion, followed by a dialogue, on the human rights of women, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. The panellists were: Rose M. Migiro (United Republic of Tanzania), Head, Department of Civil and Criminal Law, University of Dar-es-Salaam; Cecilia Medina (Chile), Member, Human Rights Committee; Shanthi Dairiam (Malaysia), Director, IWRAW Asia/Pacific; and

Shelagh Day (Canada), Special Advisor on Human Rights, National Association of Women and the Law.

Participants noted that the Beijing Platform for Action reaffirmed that all human rights were universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that the human rights of women and girls were an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. Building on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and taking it further, the Platform stressed that enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls was a priority for Governments and the United Nations and was essential for the advancement of women. The Platform underlined the importance of gender analysis in addressing the systemic and systematic nature of discrimination against women.

Women's enjoyment of their human rights required a holistic approach to, and a better understanding of, women's human rights, including violations thereof, and Governments had primary responsibility for ensuring women's full enjoyment of their rights. A compartmentalization of rights - for example, of civil and political rights, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, on the other - was not in keeping with the spirit of fundamental human rights and not conducive to achieving women's equality, advancement and empowerment, since development and human rights complemented each other.

Although progress had been made in many countries in achieving women's de jure equality, women's de facto lack of, or limited enjoyment of, human rights was particularly visible in their economic inequality, which contributed to women's poverty. That constituted a significant obstacle to women's economic empowerment and to development. Women's enjoyment of human rights would strengthen democracy and contribute to more accountable and transparent government.

Representatives cited factors contributing to women's lack of enjoyment of human rights, including the continuing prevalence of discriminatory cultural norms and traditions, national laws, including customary laws, inconsistent with international human rights norms, harmful traditional practices, and women's high levels of illiteracy and consequent marginalization and exclusion. Trends such as globalization, market liberalization and privatization had had an impact on women's enjoyment of their human rights as well, contributing to the changing role of the State, including its decreasing ability to deliver social services.

Some participants noted that indigenous, disabled, refugee and ethnic minority women, elderly women and single mothers were among the most vulnerable. Women in poverty or precarious economic situations were increasingly becoming victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Migrant women workers were susceptible to multiple forms of discrimination.

Equal access to rights, equal opportunities for the enjoyment of rights, and equal treatment in that enjoyment remained to be achieved in areas such as health and health care, education, work and employment, and participation in public life. Widespread discrimination against women persisted with regard to ownership of land, property and inheritance rights and access to economic resources such as credit and agricultural extension services, all of which were

among the essential means for women to overcome poverty. Discrimination in marriage, family and nationality laws also persisted. Violence against human rights activists and defenders of women's rights further inhibited progress. Religious fundamentalism had also often led to a denial of rights to women.

There was general agreement that knowledge of rights was an important starting point for improving enjoyment of rights. Restrictive and traditional interpretations and applications of human rights law from a male perspective affected the ways in which women experienced rights or violations thereof. Clarifying the scope and content of human rights from a gender perspective required a new approach on the part, inter alia, of international human rights treaty bodies. It also required that States parties, in their regular reporting to those bodies, include gender-specific information.

Human rights education, research and broad-based awareness-raising of women's human rights were needed, along with efforts to reach illiterate and disadvantaged women. Men also needed to be targeted for increased awareness. The role of non-governmental organizations and civil society was pivotal in the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

At the national level, legislative change was necessary but not sufficient. Constant and critical monitoring of legal provisions was required to determine their impact on women's enjoyment of their rights. International human rights law and jurisprudence provided guidance and incentives for domestic legislative reform. The impact of, and change brought about by, other measures also needed to be monitored over the long term.

Some representatives emphasized that the availability of strong and independent national institutions for promoting the enjoyment of rights, including remedies for violations, was essential for the realization of women's rights. Such institutions should allow diverse groups of women to share their experience and thus lead to an enriched understanding of factors that affected the enjoyment of rights.

At the international level, the establishment of an International Criminal Court was viewed favourably by a number of delegations, and there was support expressed for making gender-based persecution and trafficking in women and girls an integral part of the Court's mandate and for ensuring gender expertise and gender balance throughout the Court. Human rights bodies and mechanisms, including the Commission on Human Rights, also needed to develop greater expertise on women's human rights issues. The Commission's catalytic role in that regard could facilitate such efforts, and women's non-governmental organizations could increase their visibility at and contributions to such mainstream forums, to shape their agendas. An optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with broad standing for individuals and groups, was seen by many representatives as an essential step in strengthening the Convention.

Several speakers noted that a gender perspective needed to be mainstreamed into all human rights activities and machineries at the national and international levels. More and better data collection, more systematic use of data, and more research on women's human rights issues were essential. Women's

human rights needed to be an integral part of the development of economic, trade and fiscal policies. It was stated that economic indicators providing benchmarks of women's and men's economic realities, which were often overlooked, should be developed.

As a matter of principle, a call for action was made to address violations of women's and girls' human rights in particular countries, including Afghanistan. Concern was expressed about the situation of women and children in Algeria and Palestine and for Palestinian women, who remained refugees, unable to return to their homeland. The human rights impact of the embargo on women in Iraq was also mentioned.

C. Violence against women: Moderator's summary

At its 8th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission held a panel discussion on violence against women, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. Presentations were made by the panellists: Barbara Prammer (Austria), Federal Minister for Women's Affairs and Consumer Protection; Bonnie Campbell (United States of America), Head of Violence against Women, Office of the Justice Department; Maria Lisbeth Guevara (Venezuela), Coordinadora de la Comisión de Legislación, Consejo Nacional de la Mujer; and Radhika Coomaraswamy (Sri Lanka), Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Participants in the panel discussion and the dialogue recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action had identified violence against women as a priority concern of the international community and had defined it, in line with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (General Assembly resolution 48/104), as an act of gender-based violence occurring in public or private life. The Platform emphasized the need to take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and to study the causes and consequences of violence and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Participants emphasized that violence and fear of violence in public and private life remained one of the main concerns of women worldwide. It continued to be an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace, since it had a direct impact on women's economic, social and political participation. Thus, violence against women in all its forms constituted a flagrant violation of women's human rights, which could only be tackled through a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach.

Gender-based violence which resulted in or was likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women affected the corporal integrity of women. It was emphasized that the elimination of violence against women was therefore linked to other human rights guarantees, including the right to life, freedom from torture, detention and arbitrary arrest, and the Geneva Conventions.

All forms of gender-based violence against women had a devastating effect on women and their families, in particular their children, and brought with it the risk of a continuous cycle of violence between generations, focused on

groups of women, including women with disabilities, migrant women and women in prostitution.

It was noted that trafficking in women had become an integral feature of transnational organized crime. International cooperation was needed to address the issue of trafficking and to punish those involved in organizing and profiting from it. In several instances, regional cooperation in that regard had started, and national task forces had been established. It was underlined that the problem of trafficking should be dealt with along the lines set out by the Convention on Migrant Workers, which had not yet been ratified by all countries.

Recently, many Governments had given the elimination of violence against women top priority, as reflected in the many national action plans established in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. In addition, several countries had elaborated specific action plans to combat gender-based violence, involving non-governmental organizations. At the international level, activities carried out by existing mechanisms, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Commission on Crime Prevention, the Commission on Human Rights and reports of the Special Rapporteur on Violence, were praised.

Mention was made of good practices in the fields of appropriate assistance, management and communication, and prevention, investigation and prosecution, which involved social, educational, medical, judicial, law enforcement, and migration authorities as well as non-governmental organizations. There was consensus that legal action and reform of the criminal and civil justice systems, were critical. It was essential that perpetrators be confronted with the consequences for their behaviour and held accountable. It was noted that some countries had introduced legislation which made it possible to remove the violent offenders from the family home, instead of accommodating victims and children in shelters.

Gender training for law enforcement officers and other personnel, relevant governmental agents and officials was considered important so as to sensitize the criminal justice system regarding violence against women. In some countries, special examination kits were provided to the police for collecting forensic evidence from women. It was emphasized that the full participation of women in the development and execution of laws was required and that there was need for more gender-sensitive women police officers, prosecutors and judges. Training of health and social workers, teachers and counsellors was also necessary in order to ensure that they would be able to identify crimes of violence committed against women and girls. Effective partnership between the police and non-governmental organizations working on violence was considered crucial.

Various steps had been taken to make women aware of the existing problem, to ensure their safety and give assistance. Shelters and emergency help lines, which provided support and protection to victims, existed in many countries. Greater restrictions on access to weapons was being considered in some countries. Witness protection schemes using protective court orders had been introduced and were necessary for protecting, in particular, female victims of

trafficking and rape during war. Multidisciplinary teams made up of medical doctors, social workers, psychologists, health workers, teachers, volunteers and non-governmental organizations were providing legal assistance and social services. The valuable assistance given by non-governmental organizations in providing legal and psychological counselling was acknowledged.

To raise public awareness and to break the silence and taboos surrounding violence, public awareness campaigns on the impact of violence were considered essential. Many community education campaigns were being carried out, aimed at changing community attitudes towards violence, introducing "zero tolerance" for violent behaviour, and promoting non-violent methods of conflict resolution. Teacher training and the development of curriculum material to address gender-based violence in schools was mentioned. Media campaigns could encourage women to file complaints instead of hiding the problem. At the same time, the portrayal of violence in the media perpetuated violence and continued to have negative effects, especially on children.

Many obstacles remained, and the gap between de jure and de facto implementation persisted, since most women seemed not to seek help from crisis services or the police, because of ignorance, fear or shame. Many women were not aware of existing laws or their rights and frequently had no access to the judicial system, especially if they were poor, illiterate or migrants. It was deplored that the real extent of violence against women remained hidden as well as unreported. Random surveys suggested that the extent of the problem was much greater than estimated. Consequently, it was difficult to design adequate policies and offer sufficient services to victims. The lack or inadequacy of data available made it difficult to assess the nature, severity and effects of violence against women and to better understand its causes. The academic community needed to conduct more research on the causes and consequences of violence against women and on the economic costs that accrued to countries because of such violence. It was regretted that there were so few impact studies on steps taken to combat violence against women.

With regard to the rehabilitation of perpetrators, programmes had been carried out in a number of countries, with varied success. Most programmes focused on the role of men, emphasizing positive new role models for men and new types of male/female relationships in the family. It was important to change patriarchal values and to create a non-violent culture. However, in view of the scarcity of funds, assistance to victims of violence had to be the priority and needed to be seen as a moral obligation.

Participants also recalled the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and stressed the need for concrete follow up, including studies on the impact of measures to eliminate violence against women and to assist the victims, and it was proposed that mechanisms were needed to monitor follow up on violence against women, including good practices.

D. The girl child: Moderator's summary

At its 5th meeting, on 4 March, the Commission held a panel discussion on the girl child, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action,

and heard presentations by the following panellists: Lina Laigo (Philippines), Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development and Chairperson, Council for the Welfare of Children; Sadig Rasheed (Sudan), Director, Programme Division, UNICEF; Paloma Bonfil Sanchez (Mexico), Secretaria Ejecutiva, Grupo Interdisciplinario sobre Mujer, Trabajo y Pobreza (GIMTRAP); and Margaret Vogt (Nigeria), Senior Associate, International Peace Academy.

Following the panel discussion, 16 government delegations participated in a dialogue. Two girls, sponsored by the non-governmental organization Committee for UNICEF/Working Group on Girls, and representatives of a non-governmental organization caucus also spoke.

Speakers recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action recognized that women in many countries faced discrimination from the earliest stages of life. They also recognized that discrimination and neglect in childhood could initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion. The Platform had called upon Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to take urgent measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child, including negative traditional and cultural attitudes and practices and discrimination with respect to education, skills development and training, health and nutrition, employment and family life. It recommended that Governments enact and enforce appropriate legislation and take actions that would ensure equal rights for girls and their full participation in development.

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, a variety of policy measures and programmes specifically targeting the girl child had been introduced by countries, reflecting actions also proposed at recent United Nations conferences and summits and in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and various ILO conventions and standards. Public awareness campaigns had been organized in various regions to sensitize people to the specific needs and concerns of girls. National legislation had been reviewed and modified to protect girls. Stereotypes in teaching materials had been removed in some countries, and teachers were being given gender training. Affirmative action had been used to increase female entrants to colleges and universities.

Representatives stressed that the empowerment of the girl child was critical not only for eliminating gender-based discrimination but for personal growth. Human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, obliged States Parties to make efforts to protect the rights of the girl child and to eliminate discrimination. The two Conventions were viewed by some delegates as interrelated, and measures had been taken to implement them in a coordinated and complementary way. However, in order to be more effective, it was proposed that the two Conventions be widely disseminated in local languages and incorporated into national laws.

Education was referred to as the most important tool for girls' empowerment, and in that connection, many participants expressed concern at the high rate of dropouts among girls, compared to boys. A support system needed to be in place to help girls complete their education and to prevent the sexual

harassment of girls in schools. The paucity of role models for girls in textbooks was noted.

Reference was made to prevailing negative cultural and traditional attitudes and practices that often stood in the way of equal treatment of girls. Some of those attitudes and practices, combined with traditional role models maintained by families, discouraged girls' career development, their participation in social and political life, and their access to recreational activities and sports. A preference for sons continued in many countries, leading to discrimination against girls, often even before birth, and to such practices as female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

The situation of girls living in poor economic conditions was mentioned by a number of speakers. Those girls were often the most marginalized. They were often forced to take up low-paid work or become prostitutes. They often became domestic workers, were paid very little, and were subjected to abuse and exploitation.

In rural areas, unpaid domestic work was frequently expected from girls, preventing them from going to school or developing skills suited to income-earning activities. Moreover, their contribution to household work was often undervalued. Since globalization contributed to the further impoverishment of rural areas in many developing countries, out-migration by adults had increased and had led to an increase in girls' domestic labour and responsibilities.

In traditional cultures, families generally maintained the traditional roles of males and females. Since the empowerment of girls started in the family, families needed to recognize the rights and specific needs of the girl child beyond the traditional cultural framework.

The particular needs of adolescent girls resulting from the transitional and developmental nature of their physical and emotional states were acknowledged. Adolescent girls and boys needed to be given adequate information on sexual and reproductive health, and it was necessary to help counsellors who dealt with adolescents to be gender-sensitive. It was also important for national Governments and the international community to recognize that the health needs of girls were generally different from those of boys. Traditional practices that were harmful to girls' health, such as female genital mutilation, should be eliminated. Adolescent girls should be empowered and supported by their families and communities to take control of their physical well-being and educational attainment.

Reference was made to girls affected by armed conflict and to refugee girls. Where the family system was no longer functioning, many children were left without parents or primary caregivers. Concerns were expressed that girls in such circumstances were particularly vulnerable to rape and sexual violence, for example, in refugee camps or when fleeing their home countries.

Personnel involved in peacekeeping and humanitarian activities should be sensitized to the specific needs of girl children and should not exploit them. Attention was drawn to young girls as soldiers, a phenomenon that seemed to be on the increase and on which more data and research were required.

Much concern was expressed on trafficking and the sexual abuse of girls, including the growing sex industry, and on child pornography, including the use of the Internet in that regard. Rehabilitation of the victims of sexual abuse and trafficking needed to be organized by trained personnel. Mechanisms at the national and international levels to prosecute and punish the perpetrators were also urgently needed, whether their offences were committed in their own or in a foreign country.

E. Women and armed conflict: Moderator's summary

On 4 March, at its 6th meeting, the Commission held a panel discussion on women and armed conflict, followed by a dialogue. The panellists were: Helga Hernes (Norway), Special Advisor in the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs on peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy; Rafiga Azimova (Azerbaijan), Head of the Research Centre of the Council of Women; Bernard Muna (Cameroon), International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; and Hina Jilani (Pakistan), Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Representatives noted that the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that peace was inextricably linked to equality between women and men, but that aggression, foreign occupation, ethnic conflict and other types of conflict were an ongoing reality, affecting women and men in nearly every region. They recalled that, building on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Platform had stressed that violations of the human rights of women in times of armed conflict were violations of fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law and emphasized that the implementation of cooperative approaches to peace and security were urgently needed. Noting the consequences of armed conflict for women, which included internal displacement and refugee flight, the speakers stressed the crucial role of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the preservation of social order in times of armed conflict. They also reiterated the Platform's emphasis on the importance of all forms of education to foster a culture of peace, tolerance and respect for diversity and stressed the critical role of an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes to address armed conflict or other conflicts.

It was noted that contemporary armed conflict affected civilians disproportionately. Most conflicts were fought within, rather than between, States and were no longer fought exclusively by professional soldiers. Non-state actors, including paramilitaries and vigilantes, increasingly threatened the security of civilians, particularly women and children. Reduced tolerance for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and decreased respect for the right to self-determination brought about instability. The easy availability of small arms, including land-mines, to non-state actors had heightened the possibilities of civilian insecurity and risk, especially for women and children, both during conflict and post-conflict, in, inter alia, refugee camps and camps for the internally displaced.

Representatives noted that, although entire communities were affected by and suffered the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls were particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. They

suffered many forms of abuse during armed conflict, but were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, rape, sexual mutilation, sexually humiliating treatment, forcible impregnation, sexual slavery and forced marriages. Sexual violence was commonly used as an instrument of war. Sexual violence brought with it the risk of HIV/AIDS and pregnancy. Women have been forced to bear and raise the children of their aggressors or forced to raise rejected orphans. Women have also experienced the trauma of being shamed in the eyes of their communities, of losing relatives and friends in times of armed conflict, and of having to take responsibility for the care of surviving family members.

Representatives recalled that armed conflicts, civil strife and foreign occupation had resulted in internal displacement and refugee flows, with women and children comprising the majority of those who were internally displaced or refugees. Displaced and refugee women faced the risk of abuse during flight, in refugee camps and in countries of ultimate refuge, from the military, paramilitaries, bandit gangs and male refugees.

Camps for the internally displaced and refugees had sometimes become the site for continuing conflict and, in the absence of structures to preserve law and order, had served to shield the activities of warring groups. Displaced and refugee women in camps faced other difficulties, including lack of physical security and privacy, difficulties relating to health, and lack of suitable occupation and income-generating opportunities. Humanitarian workers were sometimes insensitive to the needs of women in camps, and that circumstance underlined the importance of gender balance among such workers and mainstreaming a gender perspective into their activities. Representatives noted the importance of training all security workers in international human rights and humanitarian principles and the participation of women in all areas, as civilian and military peacekeepers, peace-builders and as special representatives of the Secretary-General. National armed forces should be well acquainted with international human rights and humanitarian principles as well as gender perspectives. The increased participation of women at all levels of national armed forces should be a specific goal.

Breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law affecting women required a particularly effective response and should not be marginalized during post-war reconstruction. Speakers emphasized the importance of justice at the international and national levels to provide the foundation for national reconciliation. Delegates stressed that the statute of the proposed International Criminal Court should provide for the prosecution of violations of the human rights of women during conflict and should specifically address sexual violations. National legal systems should also be reviewed in order to ensure that they provided justice for women who had been affected by armed conflict. The importance of procedural and evidentiary safeguards and of strengthened support for victims was also emphasized by representatives. Representatives encouraged support for trust funds for women victims of armed conflict.

Many representatives emphasized the potential of women as agents of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building. Noting that women should not be viewed primarily as the victims of armed conflict, delegates noted that the participation of women in peacekeeping missions had positive results and that their participation should be secured in all relevant areas, particularly

in modern multifunctional peacekeeping operations. Innovative strategies to encourage women's participation in peace processes, refugee camps and their reconstruction, and post-conflict resolution was crucial, and concrete steps were necessary to ensure that women were appointed as special representatives of the Secretary-General. Close connections with grass-root and local initiatives with regard to peace-building were also essential.

Representatives stressed that sustained and energetic efforts to avert the occurrence of conflict were required, along with short-term and long-term strategies to develop a culture of peace. Formal and informal education should incorporate values emphasizing the morality of peace, a tolerance of diversity, gender sensitivity, and respect for human rights. Governments and civil society, including the media, should develop programmes involving women relating to peace education and conflict prevention and resolution, and girls and women should be encouraged to speak as women, rather than as representatives of other interests.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION
IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Botswana,* Canada,* Democratic Republic of the Congo,* Finland, Kyrgyzstan,* Malawi,* Mauritius,* Mozambique,* Namibia,* South Africa,* Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania,* and Zambia*: draft resolution

Human rights and land rights discrimination

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[3] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[4] the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] Resolution 217A(III).

[2] Resolution 2200A(XXI).

[3] Ibid.

[4] Resolution 34/180.

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adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights,[5] and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[6]

Noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

Noting also that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, and concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

Gravely concerned that in many countries, the treatment accorded to women, whether in terms of property rights, land rights, rights of inheritance, laws related to marriage and divorce or the rights to acquire nationality, manage property or seek employment, reflect the inequality between women and men,

Also concerned that in situations of poverty, women are disproportionately affected and have the least access to productive resources, food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

Recognizing that land is a valuable resource, and that secure land rights are key rights for the economic empowerment of women,

Also recognizing that the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life is essential for the full and complete development of a country,

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men, as enshrined, inter alia, in the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

1. Stresses the need for full and urgent implementation of the rights of women, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[3] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[4]

2. Urges all States to take all necessary measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of all human rights and

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[5] Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

[6] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men, and to take effective action against violations of those rights and freedoms;

3. Calls upon States:

(a) To set goals and develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies for addressing the rights and needs of women;

(b) To generate social support to change the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices that are based on the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for women and men;

(c) To develop innovative activities at all levels, including human rights education, to increase women's awareness of their human rights and the mechanisms that are available to protect and enforce women's full enjoyment of them, inter alia, through the translation, production and dissemination of information materials on these rights to all sectors of society;

(d) To ensure women's equal rights with men in the areas of education, health and nutrition, and to provide equal access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes;

4. Urges States to pay particular attention to women and their rights and needs in designing and implementing development programmes, and specifically to address the feminization of poverty and its root causes, including secure land tenure;

5. Urges States to design and revise laws to ensure that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through the right to equal inheritance, and to undertake administrative reforms and other necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, appropriate technologies, access to markets and information;

6. Calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the exercise of her mandate, to increase awareness that land rights discrimination is a violation of human rights and that in addressing the right to development secure land tenure for women should be taken into account;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, individually and collectively, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, take into account land rights discrimination and its negative impact on women in all poverty eradication programmes and policies;

8. Calls upon all States and all relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session on initiatives related to the present resolution.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION
IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Angola, Bangladesh,* Botswana,* Kyrgyzstan,* Lesotho,
Malawi,* Marshall Islands,* Mauritius,* Morocco,
Namibia,* Pakistan,* South Africa,* Swaziland,
Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania,* Zambia*
and Zimbabwe*: draft resolution

The girl child

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 52/100 of 12 December 1997,

Also recalling all relevant conferences and human rights instruments as they concern the girl child,

Noting with appreciation the expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights, held at Addis Ababa from 13 to 17 October 1997, which was jointly organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the Economic Commission for Africa,

Deeply concerned about the discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child, which often result in less access for girls to education, nutrition, physical and mental health care, in girls enjoying fewer rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation, and in violence and harmful practices, such as incest, early marriage, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation,

Taking note of the panel discussion held on the critical areas of concern on the girl child during the forty-second session of the Commission,

Stressing the need for more awareness-raising at the global level on the plight of the girl child,

1. Demands that Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, ensure the full and urgent implementation of the rights of the girl child, as guaranteed to her under all human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child[1] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women;[2]

2. Calls upon the Secretary-General to appoint a special ambassador to raise awareness on the special needs and concerns of the girl child;

3. Requests Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to give due account to the recommendations contained in the report of the expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission on the Status of Women prior to the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women in the year 2000, and thereafter on a biennial basis, on the initiatives and progress made in the implementation of the Platform for Action[3] adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women relating to the Girl Child.

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[1] General Assembly resolution 44/25.

[2] General Assembly resolution 34/180.

[3] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Forty-second session
2-13 March 1998
Agenda item 3 (c)

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Austria,* Bolivia, Canada,* Chile, Finland,* France, Germany, Greece, Ireland,* Israel,* Italy,* Malawi,* Marshall Islands,* Netherlands,* Panama,* Portugal, Rwanda, South Africa,* Spain,* Sweden,* Turkey,* United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America: draft resolution

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends the following resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

The Economic and Social Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenants on Human Rights,[2] the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[3] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,[4]

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[2] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI).

[3] General Assembly resolution 39/46.

[4] General Assembly resolution 34/180.

the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[6] and other instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law,

Deeply concerned by the continuing and substantiated reports of violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, particularly in areas under control of the Taliban, resulting, inter alia, in restrictions upon movement, denial of equal access of women to health care, prohibition of most forms of female employment, restrictions upon education for women and girls, the closing of girls' schools, and severe limitations upon the enrolment of females in institutions of higher education and upon their access to humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in particular his special focus on violations of the human rights of women and girls, especially in territories under the control of the Taliban faction,

Welcoming the Secretary General's decision to send a gender mission to Afghanistan, hoping that it will serve as a model for future efforts to address the gender dimension of crisis/conflict situations, and encouraging him to continue to send such high-level missions, when appropriate,

Taking into account the report of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women on her visit to Afghanistan in November 1997,

Expressing appreciation for the support and solidarity of the international community with the women and girls of Afghanistan, supportive of the women of Afghanistan who protest violations of their human rights, and encouraging women and men worldwide to continue efforts to draw attention to their situation and to promote the immediate restoration of their ability to enjoy their human rights,

1. Condemns the continuing violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in all areas of Afghanistan;

2. Calls on all parties within Afghanistan to recognize, protect, promote and act in accordance with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with international human rights instruments, and to respect international humanitarian law;

3. Strongly urges all of the Afghan factions to end discriminatory policies and to recognize, protect and promote the equal rights and dignity of

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[5] General Assembly resolution 44/25.

[6] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

women and men, including their rights to full and equal participation in the life of the country, freedom of movement, access to education and health facilities, employment outside the home, personal security, and freedom from intimidation and harassment, with special respect to the implications of discriminatory policies for the distribution of aid;

4. Appeals to all Member States and to the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan integrates gender concerns and actively attempts to promote the participation of both women and men and to promote peace and human rights;

5. Encourages the continuing efforts of the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations and donors to ensure that all United Nations-assisted programmes in Afghanistan are formulated and coordinated in such a way as to promote and ensure the participation of women in those programmes, and that women benefit equally with men from such programmes;

6. Welcomes the establishment of the ad hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Gender in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and encourages Member States to make particular efforts to promote the human rights of women in Afghanistan.

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
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2-13 March 1998
Agenda item 3 (a)

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: REVIEW OF MAINSTREAMING IN ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Argentina,* Azerbaijan,* Bangladesh,* Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,* Ecuador,* Guatemala,* Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan,* Kazakhstan,* Kyrgyzstan,* Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Namibia,* Nigeria,* Pakistan,* Peru, South Africa,* Tajikistan,* Tunisia,* Turkey,* Turkmenistan,* Uzbekistan,* and Zimbabwe*: draft resolution

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling its resolutions 39/2 of 31 March 1995, 40/1 of 22 March 1996 and 41/1 of 21 March 1997,

Recalling the relevant provisions contained in the instruments of international humanitarian law relative to the protection of women and children in areas of armed conflict,

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, and in accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Welcoming the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] by the Fourth World Conference on Women, including the provisions regarding violence against women and children,

Expressing grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions throughout the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they have caused,

Emphasizing that all forms of violence committed against the civilian population, including women and children in areas of armed conflict, including capturing them as hostages, seriously contravene international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of victims of war,

Expressing its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict will promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

1. Condemns violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict, and calls for an effective response to such acts, including the immediate release of such women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;

2. Strongly urges all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict and to take all necessary measures for the protection of these women and children and for their immediate release;

3. Urges all parties to conflicts to provide unimpeded access to specialized humanitarian assistance for these women and children;

4. Requests the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to use their capabilities and efforts to facilitate the release of these women and children;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session.

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[1] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1.

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
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Agenda item 3 (c)

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION
IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Dominican Republic, Ecuador*, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines and Sri Lanka: draft resolution

Women migrant workers

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling all resolutions relevant to women migrant workers adopted by the General Assembly, in particular resolution 52/97 of 12 December 1997, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women,[1]

Also recalling the outcome of major world conferences, specifically those pertaining to women migrant workers,

Emphasizing the need for comprehensive, broad-based information and a wide exchange of experiences and lessons learned by Member States and civil society in the formulation of policies and strategies to address the problem of violence against women migrant workers,

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

Recognizing the importance of continued cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women migrant workers,

1. Takes note of the Secretary-General's report on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women;[2]

2. Requests concerned Governments to include in their national action plans information on the problems of women migrant workers which could form part of a database for the formulation of appropriate measures to address the problem of violence against women migrant workers;

3. Encourages Governments to avail themselves of the expertise of the United Nations, including the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat and other relevant bodies such as the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to develop appropriate data collection methodologies that will generate comparable data on violence against women migrant workers as bases for research and analyses on the subject;

4. Invites Governments, in cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to undertake further research on the causes and consequences of violence against women migrant workers;

5. Requests concerned States Parties to include in their periodic reports to relevant human rights treaty bodies updated and comprehensive information on actions they have taken to address the problem of violence against women migrant workers;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to establish a database of good practices and lessons learned relating to gender-based violence, in cooperation with relevant entities in the United Nations system, and in that regard, invites Member States and non-governmental organizations to provide information on bilateral and multilateral agreements, national experiences and lessons learned, initiatives and projects which have proved viable and effective as bases for evolving model strategies for dealing with violence against women migrant workers;

7. Calls upon concerned Governments to put in place penal and criminal sanctions to punish perpetrators of violence against women migrant workers and to provide survivors with the full range of immediate assistance, such as counselling, legal and consular assistance, temporary shelters and other measures that will allow them to be present during the judicial process;

8. Encourages Member States to ratify and comply with International Labour Organization conventions and to sign and ratify or accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;[3]

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[2] E/CN.6/1998/5.

[3] General Assembly resolution 52/115.

9. Invites Member States to implement, as appropriate, the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice;[4]

10. Invites the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to develop a general recommendation on women and migration;

11. Requests the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within the context of the country cooperation and development assistance framework, to support national measures designed to strengthen preventive action, in particular, education and information campaigns to increase awareness of the issue of violence against women migrant workers;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to take into account the relevant provisions contained in the present resolution in preparing the study requested in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 52/97.

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[4] General Assembly resolution 52/86, annex.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION
IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Austria*, Bangladesh*, Bolivia, Canada*, Chile, Costa Rica,* Côte d'Ivoire*, Dominican Republic, Ecuador*, El Salvador*, Ethiopia, Guatemala*, Israel*, Mali, Morocco, Panama*, Paraguay, Philippines, Spain* and United States of America: draft resolution

Older women and support systems: gender and caregiving

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Aware that gender difference in life expectancy rises with age and that, therefore, two thirds of the very old are women,

Also aware that, traditionally, women are relied upon as caregivers at all ages and that they make an essential but often unrecognized and unremunerated contribution to society and the economy,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on older women and support systems,[1] based on the report and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Caregiving and Older Persons: Gender Dimensions, which underscored that:

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] E/CN.6/1998/4.

(a) Changes in the traditional support systems affect women and men differently;

(b) Urbanization has weakened the traditional support systems for older persons;

(c) There are growing numbers of women, who are the primary caretakers, entering the labour market;

(d) Because women live longer than men, they are more likely than men to live alone in old age; in most countries, widows outnumber widowers;

(e) Older women are more likely than men to be poor;

(f) Older women face a higher risk of chronic illness and disability; female advantage in life expectancy is often offset by disability;

(g) Older women's contributions to the well-being of their families, communities and the economy are widely overlooked,

1. Takes note of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Invites Member States to consider implementing, at the national level, as appropriate, the recommendations contained in the annex below, which are based on the Secretary-General's report and the views expressed in the Commission by member States;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to take into account these recommendations when preparing his report to the Commission at its forty-third session, as requested in its resolution 41/2.

Annex

RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAREGIVING AND OLDER PERSONS: GENDER DIMENSIONS

A. Research

So far, there is a lack of expertise and research on support systems for older persons from a gender perspective. National and international statistical and research institutes should:

(a) Disaggregate all data by age and sex;

(b) Analyse the needs of older persons and caregivers from a gender perspective;

(c) Pay special attention to the situation of older women and men in developing countries and carry out research on how support systems affect women and men differently;

(d) Analyse the consequences of changes in pensions and health care based on gender and age;

(e) Develop a methodology to measure the value of women's unpaid labour.

B. Economic security

Women in all parts of the world are more likely than men to be poor. Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Ensure that women at all stages of life have access to employment, social protection systems and income equal to that of men;

(b) Value the important contributions older women make to development;

(c) See that particular attention is paid to efforts to eliminate the gender gap in income;

(d) Eliminate discrimination against women in pension funds that are based on the principle of continuous employment;

(e) Ensure that older women have access to credit and income-earning possibilities;

(f) Equally involve men and women at all levels when designing and implementing economic policies that affect older persons.

C. Education and empowerment

The level of formal education and participation in public life of older women is much lower than that of men. Governmental and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Ensure that throughout their lives, girls and women have equal access to education and vocational training, and promote women's self-esteem at all stages of life;

(b) Promote lifelong learning on the part of women, provide possibilities for training and retraining, and equip older women with knowledge of modern and traditional technologies so they remain in the mainstream of society;

(c) Promote a positive image of older women in political and economic decision-making through mass media and education in order to ensure older women's autonomy and productivity;

(d) Give special attention to the situation of older women in the context of the International Year of Older Persons (1999).

D. Well-being of caregivers

Women as caregivers are in demand. In order to support caregivers, Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Attach higher value to unpaid caregiving labour and be aware that caregiving is not in unlimited supply;

(b) Ensure that the demand put upon women as caregivers does not increase disproportionately to that put upon men;

(c) Provide opportunities to caregivers for occasional respites from their duties and provide caregivers with various services, such as housekeeping help, self-help groups, specialized counselling and training;

(d) Promote an equal sharing and better reconciliation of working, employment and caregiving responsibilities between men and women;

(e) Consider providing financial assistance to informal caregivers;

(f) Support women and men who combine paid work and elder care with measures such as flexible working arrangements, family leave for the care of older dependent family members, and reintegration of caregivers after a career break;

(g) Offer a variety of alternative services to older people, such as home care and day-care centres.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Indonesia*: draft resolution

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends the following resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

Palestinian women

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,[1]

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[2] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children,

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] E/CN.6/1998/2/Add.2.

[2] Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

and the Beijing Platform for Action[3] adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Also recalling its resolution 1997/16 of 21 July 1997 and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Further recalling the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women[4] as it concerns the protection of civilian populations,

Concerned about the stalemate facing the Middle East peace process, including the lack of implementation of the agreements reached in Washington D.C., between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli positions and measures,

Concerned about the continuing difficult situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestine Territory, including Jerusalem, and about the severe consequences of continuous illegal Israeli settlements activities, as well as the harsh economic conditions and other consequences for the situation of Palestinian women and their families, resulting from the frequent closures and isolation of the Occupied Territory,

1. Stresses its support for the Middle East peace process and the need for speedy and full implementation of the agreements already reached between the parties;

2. Reaffirms that the Israeli occupation remains a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development planning of their society;

3. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[5] the Regulations annexed to The Hague Convention of 1907[6] and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949[7] in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families;

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[3] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] General Assembly resolution 48/104.

[5] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[6] See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

[7] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

4. Calls upon Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

5. Urges Member States, financial organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions to intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women for the creation of projects responding to their needs, especially during the transitional period;

6. Requests the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[1] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action;[2]

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women by all available means, and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Forty-second session
2-13 March 1998
Agenda item 3 (a)

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
REVIEW OF MAINSTREAMING IN ORGANIZATIONS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Austria*, Canada*, Chile, Finland*, Germany, Greece, Ireland*, Kyrgyzstan*, Namibia*, Netherlands*, New Zealand*, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa*, Spain*, Swaziland, Sweden*, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia*: draft resolution

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, including the status of women in the Secretariat

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, and the comments of the Commission on the Status of Women contained in Commission resolution 40/10 and the annex thereto;

Noting with concern that a number of obstacles have been encountered in the implementation of the plan;

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the plan[1] and endorses the recommendations contained therein;

2. Urges the Secretary-General to ensure that the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the plan are dealt with effectively, in particular through heightened accountability at all levels, particularly that of senior managers, and including the necessary training, where appropriate;

3. Emphasizes the need for continued efforts by all areas of the United Nations system to implement the plan fully;

4. Stresses in particular the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the formulation and implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, notably at the country level;

5. Welcomes the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, particularly its coordination and catalytic role in the area of gender mainstreaming, policy analysis and operational activities in the work programmes of the bodies of the United Nations system, and its work in compiling good practices, guidelines and indicators in the area of gender mainstreaming;

6. Urges Member States, when considering the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, fully to integrate a gender perspective into those activities;

7. Requests the United Nations Development Group to institute guidelines and procedures for the implementation of relevant aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action[2] into the planning and preparing of the operational activities for development of United Nations funds and programmes;

8. Recommends that gender equality and women's empowerment goals be integrated into the continuing United Nations reform process, including in the work of the executive committees, and in that regard, reaffirms the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at the D-1 level and above, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the lack of representation or underrepresentation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition.

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[1] E/CN.6/1998/3.

[2] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.